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Advancement of women

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Improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system

The General Assembly,

Recalling Articles 1 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as Article 8, which provides that the United Nations shall place no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs,

Recalling also the goal, contained in the Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women,[1] of achieving overall gender equality, particularly at the Professional level and above, by 2000 and the further actions and initiatives set out in the outcome document adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-third special session, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century",[2]

Recalling further its resolution 57/180 of 18 December 2002, as well as its resolution 57/305 of 15 April 2003, in particular, section II, paragraphs 39, 40 and 41, in which it reaffirmed the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by 2000 in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at the D-1 level and above, strongly encouraged Member States to support these efforts by identifying and regularly presenting more women candidates and requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of progress made towards the goal of

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Resolution S-23/3, annex.

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50/50 gender representation, particularly in offices in which women are underrepresented, and to present it to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session,

Taking note of Commission on Human Rights resolution 2003/44 of 23 April 2003[3] on integrating the human rights of women throughout the United Nations system, in particular its paragraph 15, in which the Commission recognized that gender mainstreaming would strongly benefit from the enhanced and full participation of women, including at the higher levels of decision-making within the United Nations system,

Taking into account the continuing lack of representation or underrepresentation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries, including least developed countries and small island developing States, and from countries with economies in transition,

Noting with appreciation the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, the Office of Human Resources Management, the Department of Public Information, the Department of Management/Office of the Under-Secretary-General and the Executive Office of the Secretary-General of the Secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, which have achieved or continue to maintain the goal of gender balance, as well as those departments and offices that have met or exceeded the goal of 50 per cent in the selection of women candidates for vacant posts in the past year,[4]

Expressing concern that for the second consecutive year there was a slowing of progress towards achieving the target of 50/50 gender balance, below the average increase of 1 percentage point per year achieved in previous years,[5]

Welcoming the increase in the number of women at the Under-Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General, D-1 and D-2 levels between 1998 and 2003, but expressing particular concern at the decline or stagnation in the number of women at the P-4 and P-5 levels,[6]

Expressing concern that between 1998 and 2003 there has been almost no progress in the rate of representation of women in appointments of one year or more at the Professional and higher levels,[7]

Also expressing concern that there is still only one special representative of the Secretary-General who is a woman,[8]

Welcoming the commitment of the Secretary-General to set concrete targets for the appointment of women as his special representatives and special envoys in order to reach the target of 50/50 gender balance by 2015,[9]

Welcoming also the new flexible working arrangements authorized in all departments and offices of the United Nations Secretariat,[10]

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[3] See E/2003/23 (Part I), chap. II.
[4] A/58/374, paras. 10, 43 and 74.
[5] Ibid., para. 74.
[6] Ibid., paras. 40-42.
[7] Ibid., paras. 31 and 38.
[8] Ibid., para. 20.
[9] S/2002/1154, para. 44.
[10] ST/SGB/2003/4 and A/58/374, para. 59.

Noting with concern that the statistics on the representation of women in some organizations of the United Nations system are not fully up to date,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General and the actions described therein;[11]

2. *Regrets* that the goal of 50/50 gender distribution was not met by the end of 2000, and urges the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to realize significant progress towards this goal in the near future;

3. *Reaffirms* the urgent goal of achieving 50/50 gender distribution in all categories of posts within the United Nations system, especially at senior and policy-making levels, with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, and also taking into account the continuing lack of representation or underrepresentation of women from certain countries, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

4. *Expresses concern* that in three departments and offices of the Secretariat women still account for less than 30 per cent of staff and that in three organizations of the United Nations system women still account for less than 20 per cent of staff, and encourages the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to meet the goal of gender balance within the United Nations system;[12]

5. *Welcomes*:

(a) The ongoing personal commitment of the Secretary-General to meeting the goal of gender equality and his assurance that gender balance will be given the highest priority in his continuing efforts to bring about a new management culture in the Organization;

(b) The pledge of the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts to meet the gender equality goals set out in the Beijing Declaration,[13] and the Platform for Action;[1]

(c) The inclusion of the objective of improving gender balance in action plans on human resources management for individual departments and offices, and encourages further cooperation, including the sharing of best-practice initiatives, between heads of departments and offices, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Office of Human Resources Management of the Secretariat in the implementation of those plans, which include specific targets and strategies for improving the representation of women in individual departments and offices;

(d) The decision, within the context of the new staff selection system,[14] to hold heads of departments and offices accountable for meeting the gender targets in departmental human resource action plans through their performance compacts;

(e) The continuing designation of focal points for women in the United Nations system, and requests the Secretary-General to ensure that focal points are

[11] A/58/374.

[12] A/58/374, paras. 11 and 44.

[13] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

[14] See ST/AI/2002/4.

designated at a sufficiently high level and enjoy full access to senior management, both at Headquarters and in the field;

(f) The continued provision of specific training programmes on gender mainstreaming and gender issues in the workplace, tailored to meet the special needs of individual departments, commends those heads of departments and offices who have launched gender training for their managers and staff, and strongly encourages those who have not yet organized such training to do so as soon as possible;

(g) The formulation by the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management of a project to strengthen the Secretary-General's efforts to achieve gender balance by adopting a more coordinated and integrated approach to this issue, with the purpose of setting and achieving verifiable goals to ensure that gender balance targets are attained by 2006;[15]

(h) The preparation of an analysis by the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, to be presented to the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, of the probable causes of the slow advancement in the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system, with a view to elaborating new strategies for achieving gender parity;[16]

(i) The commitment of the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to explore ways to better integrate the departmental focal points in the new staffing system, so that the focal points can continue to play an important role for the periodic and systematic monitoring of the recruitment, retention and career advancement of women, and looks forward to information on this matter in the next report;[17]

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in order to achieve and maintain the goal of 50/50 gender distribution with full respect for the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter:

(a) To continue to develop innovative recruitment strategies to identify and attract suitably qualified women candidates, particularly from and in developing countries and countries with economies in transition and other Member States that are unrepresented or underrepresented in the Secretariat, and in occupations in which women are underrepresented;

(b) To encourage the United Nations system and its agencies and departments to make more effective use of existing information technology resources and systems and other established methods to disseminate information about employment opportunities for women and to better coordinate rosters of potential women candidates;

(c) To continue to monitor closely the progress made by departments and offices in meeting the goal of gender balance, to ensure that the appointment and

[15] A/58/374, para. 48.

[16] Ibid., paras. 56-58 and 75.

[17] Ibid., para. 76.

promotion of suitably qualified women be at least 50 per cent of all appointments and promotions until the goal of 50/50 gender distribution is met;[18]

(d) To strongly encourage heads of departments and offices to continue selecting female candidates when their qualifications are the same as, or better than, those of male candidates, and to effectively encourage, monitor and assess the performance of managers in meeting targets for improving women's representation;

(e) To encourage consultation by heads of departments and offices with departmental focal points on women during the selection process and to ensure that the focal points are designated at a sufficiently high level and enjoy full and effective access to senior management;

(f) To extend ongoing training and sensitization of managers on gender balance issues;[19]

(g) To enable the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women to effectively contribute to, monitor and facilitate the setting and implementation of gender targets in human resource action plans, including by ensuring access to the information required to carry out that work;

(h) To intensify his efforts to create, within existing resources, a gender-sensitive work environment supportive of the needs of his staff, both women and men, including through actively pursuing appropriate work/life policies, such as flexible working time, flexible workplace arrangements, career development, mentoring programmes[20] and childcare and elder-care needs, as well as through the provision of more comprehensive information to prospective candidates and new recruits on employment opportunities for spouses, the provision of support for the activities of women's networks and organizations within the United Nations system and the expansion of gender-sensitivity training in all departments, offices and duty stations, including more information and training of staff and managers on the benefits of the work/life policies on productivity and effectiveness;[21]

(i) To strengthen further the policy against harassment, including sexual harassment, by, inter alia, ensuring the full implementation of the guidelines for its application at Headquarters and in the field, and in this context welcomes the work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in issuing guidance for field missions on the procedures to be followed for handling disciplinary issues and allegations of serious misconduct involving mission personnel, particularly uniformed personnel,[22] and is encouraged by the agreement in the Staff-Management Coordination Committee that the procedures for dealing with allegations of sexual harassment be reviewed and incorporated within a new administrative instruction covering all forms of harassment;[23]

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[18] Ibid., paras. 21 and 55.
[19] Ibid., para. 75.
[20] Ibid., paras. 42 and 67.
[21] Ibid., para. 78.
[22] Ibid., para. 63.
[23] Ibid., para. 64.

7. *Strongly encourages* the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, especially in matters related to peacekeeping, peace-building, preventive diplomacy and economic and social development, as well as in operational activities, including appointment as resident coordinators, and to appoint more women to other high-level positions in the context of his commitment to set concrete targets for the appointment of women as his special representatives and special envoys in order to reach the target of 50/50 gender balance by 2015;[24]

8. *Encourages* the Secretary-General and the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations system to continue to develop common approaches for retaining women, promoting inter-agency mobility and improving career development opportunities;

9. *Encourages* the United Nations and Member States to continue to implement the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", pertaining to the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system;[2]

10. *Strongly encourages* Member States:

(a) To support the efforts of the United Nations and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender distribution, especially at senior and policymaking levels, by identifying and regularly submitting more women candidates for appointment to positions in the United Nations system, by identifying and proposing national recruitment sources, including through the establishment of networks with professional organizations,[25] that will assist the organizations of the United Nations system in identifying suitable women candidates, in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, by creating awareness among their nationals, particularly women, of available vacancies throughout the United Nations system,[26] and by encouraging more women to apply for positions within the Secretariat, the specialized agencies, funds and programmes and the regional commissions, including in areas in which women are underrepresented, such as peacekeeping, peace-building and other non-traditional areas;

(b) To identify women candidates for assignment to peacekeeping missions and to improve the representation of women in military and civilian police contingents;

(c) To identify and submit regularly more women candidates for appointment or election to intergovernmental, expert and treaty bodies;

(d) To identify and nominate more women candidates for appointment or election as judges or other senior officials in international courts and tribunals;

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[24] S/2002/1154, para. 44.
[25] A/58/374, para. 80.
[26] Ibid., para. 81.

(e) To cooperate closely with the United Nations to facilitate spouse employment at all the major duty stations of the Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system;[27]

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide a verbal update to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-eighth session[28] and to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution, including by providing up-to-date statistics on the number and percentage of women in all organizational units and at all levels throughout the United Nations system, as well as gender-segregated attrition rates for all organizational units and at all levels, as well as on the implementation of departmental human resource action plans, in particular for the achievement of the gender targets;

12. *Requests* the Secretariat and the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in order to facilitate the preparation of the above-mentioned report, to submit personnel data on all appointments, promotions and mobility as well as to collect and submit data in a timely fashion to measure accurately progress in achieving gender parity for staff.[29]

[27] Ibid., paras. 60 and 81.
[28] E/CN.6/2003/8, paras. 24 and 49.
[29] Ibid., para. 77.